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There appears to be some kind of spontaneous and complementary duality which is expressed in various ways, through the moieties, in economic transactions, in the reciprocity underlying all social relations, and in the complementary nature, of relations (both social and sexual) between men and women. That this duality functions so freely in Lesu may be one reason for the relatively complete integration of society there. 182
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As a mainspring of action the desire for prestige is most important. Without prestige a man (or a woman) in Lesu is like an uninhabited house. To have prestige among his fellows, a man makes the elaborate *malanggan* rites, and for the same reason he gives elaborate feasts on all the other ritual occasions. It is the desire for prestige that makes him obey the many social taboos and rules. To be gossiped about in a derogatory manner, to have it said that one has no wealth, that one has infringed even a minor aspect of the social code, is to bring disgrace. This aversion to even what appears as trifling but degrading gossip is well illustrated in the following incident. There is much talk in the village because Tsengali's pig has broken into Murri's garden and eaten much taro. Murri displays no particular anger, and appears undisturbed, but Tsengali is very much annoyed because of all the talk that the incident has occasioned. So he announces that he is going to Kabil, where his brother lives, to get a pig and give it to Murri to stop the talk. But Murri tells him that this would be foolish, "to eat a pig for nothing," and that Tsengali should not give him the pig. Instead Murri declares that the incident is ended, and that there should be no more talk. The affair is ended. It is interesting to note that in this incident it was the transgressor who was annoyed because of the blow to his prestige and not the offended man who had suffered a loss of taro. 554
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At the same time, these men who are so eager for prestige disparage themselves and belittle their contribu- 577 •

• 577 tions in the public speeches made at feasts and rites. Boasting is considered very bad taste in Lesu.

(18) Certain general characteristics of the society help also to set the social patterns of behaviour. For instance, the society is conservative and stable. The old people are in control, and change takes place very slowly. Also, these men and women of Lesu know security in several ways. First, as it has already been pointed out, they are economically secure and have no fear of poverty or old age. Secondly, they have faith. They believe in their magic, in their spirit doubles, in the value of their rites. Heretics are absent. This very real belief gives the Melanesian the kind of security that a truly devout and unquestioning Christian has. Even

[177] the newly missionized native, as far as I could observe, is not a heretic. His Christian beliefs form a superficial and upper layer laid over his own beliefs, which are not denied. The two systems simply exist on different levels, and neither meet nor conflict.¹ Finally, the society is realistic. The education of children is to really train them for adult life. There is thus a facing of situations as they exist and an adequate preparation for them. Side by side with the realism is the highly symbolic nature of this society. In the constantly used magic a leaf, a stone, a sound, a combination of words are used as symbols for certain desired ends. Before such an undertaking as getting the sea-worm (*beta*) a game is played resembling a tug-of-war, which symbolizes the drawing in of the *beta* from the sea. Some of the dances are both dramatic and symbolic performances.

Apart from the social patterns, we have also noted individual patterns. Sometimes we have seen the individual behaving quite differently from the social pattern. This may

¹ This applies only to natives who have accepted Christianity after they were mature. The psychological effect on the very young children who are now being sent to mission schools may be very different.

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from being an expert pig-hunter, and so on. While each individual participates in each occupation open to his sex (except that of the carver and magician, which are specialized ones), at the same time each person may express his personality by becoming more skilled in one than his neighbours, and so attaining additional prestige. 183 555

But even this desire for prestige is not completely universal, or rather it does not operate as a motive with equal strength for all individuals. In this society an individual acquires prestige mainly by being industrious and by having wealth, which he distributes at feasts for his dead relatives. But there are some men who do not desire prestige sufficiently to fall into this general pattern. There is the lazy man who spends his time in lolling around on the beach, who is not active in communal work, and for whom the garden is not of great interest. A man like this soon becomes known for his laziness, and will fall in the esteem of the neighbours. If he is married his wife will probably divorce him, and if he is unmarried he will find it difficult to get a wife. One young buck of the village is such a lazy person that everyone says no one will marry him. Although he will be a man of no influence or importance in the community, he will not starve, and he will be able to have a more or less happy life. His family will feed him, and if they get tired the other members of the hamlet will give him food. Should they become weary there still remains the rest of the village who will see that he does not go hungry. So the burden of his support falls on the community as a whole. There are very few such lazy men, however—one or two in a village—and it is not more than the community can easily carry. 183 558

Just as industry gives a man prestige, so is generosity considered a desirable trait. And most men fit into the social pattern and are generous in their economic transactions. But we saw how in the distribution of wealth upon the sale 183 571

183 of the *malanggan* (see Chapter VI), Palou, the owner of
517 the *malanggan* sold, was not very generous in distribution of
the payment, and how some of the members of his clan
were so disgusted with his niggardliness that they left the
rites early. Palou was decidedly not following the customary
pattern, and his behaviour occasioned gossip. Later he made a
few additional payments, but still not sufficient to make him
a generous man. He was thus able to act according to a
different pattern from the social one and "get away with it."

There are many individual differences which might be
regarded as temperamental, and which the natives are
quick to note among each other. Sevok, for instance, is a
liar, and after I had discovered this for myself all the village
confirmed it and said that was his reputation. Tukan,
Manumat, and a host of others are honest, and are held in
esteem because honesty is a desirable trait in this society,
but Sevok, although outside this pattern, continues to live
much as everyone else. In the same way Kaptan and Kuta
are quarrelsome, while Palou and Sola and most everyone
else have rather easy-going dispositions. The easily irritable
disposition of the former man and woman is taken for
granted, and regarded as a peculiarity of theirs. In working
with informants, I soon discovered a great difference in
their intelligence, and although I was not able to measure it
accurately or make any tests, yet there seemed to me to be
about the same degree of difference in intelligence between
natives of New Ireland as there is among us. Constant work
with many members of Lesu and the near-by villages as
informants made it quite clear which ones were the most
intelligent. Natives are also not only aware of differences
among themselves, but they are extraordinarily quick to
get individual differences among whites and uncannily
correct in their judgments.

183 The expression of jealousy, and apparently the feeling of
152 it too, is another temperamental or personality trait which